Trope: Firefighters AU (BearDogs)

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/25959673.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Charlie Countryman (2013), The Big C (TV), Hannibal Extended Universe - Fandom, Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Lee Fallon/Nigel (Charlie Countryman)
Characters:	Lee Fallon, Nigel (Charlie Countryman), Darko (Charlie Countryman), Beverly Katz
Additional Tags:	Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Omega Verse, Alpha/Omega, Alpha Nigel (Charlie Countryman), Omega Lee Fallon, Fire Chief Nigel, Firefighter Lee, Mentions of Cancer, cancer survivor Lee, Homosexuality, Closeted Character, Gay Bar, Hook-Up, Kissing, Marathon Sex, Knotting, Gentle Sex, Nipple Play, Hand Jobs, Awkward Conversations, Mating Cycles/In Heat, conflicted Nigel, Jealous Nigel (Charlie Countryman), Light Angst, Protective Nigel (Charlie Countryman), relief sex, Workplace Sex, Fingerfucking, Fingering, Wall Sex, Knotting in Hand, Coming Untouched, Emergency - Freeform, Fire, Injury, Hospitalization, Coming Out, Happy Ending, Hannibal Extended Universe, do not copy to another site, Podfic Welcome, can be read as traditional or multisex omega
Language:	English
Series:	Part 35 of Trope Trope: Exploring fic tropes in an Omegaverse setting, Part 90 of ABO/Omegaverse Fics by TigerPrawn, Part 110 of Tiger's Mads x Hugh Rare Pair fics
Collections:	AUgust 2020
Stats:	Published: 2020-08-17 Words: 8,575 Chapters: 1/1

Trope: Firefighters AU (BearDogs)

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Can omega Lee hold his own with alphan Fire Chief, Nigel?

Notes

NB: In this AU, being with someone of the same primary gender is considered homosexuality, regardless of secondary gender.

Lee scented the air and hummed.

He had heard a lot about the Fire Chief, including that he was an unmated and virile alpha. The most eligible bachelor in town. But nothing had prepared him for the scent of his new boss.

Nigel Lupescu had been on annual leave, apparently visiting family back in Europe, when Lee had interviewed for the post with the station's second in command. A feisty, no nonsense alpha called Bev Katz.

It had been clear that Lee was to be their only omega firefighter, and that the Fire Chief wasn't keen on having omegas on the team. Which seemed to annoy Katz as much as it did Lee, and so they got on like a house on fire immediately, as they say.

He was sure the same wouldn't be said for the Fire Chief. But the truth was, Lee gave zero fucks. He loved being a firefighter, but after months of recovering from ovarian cancer and pretty brutal treatments, he just hadn't felt up to going back into the life of a city firefighter. It had been rewarding, but gruelling and he wasn't sure his body could take that anymore. Chemotherapy had been worse than the cancer, or so it felt. So the choice had been to do something else, or to move to a small town department where most call outs were cats in trees rather than highrises burning down.

A few calls from his old boss had led him here and he'd immediately fallen in love with the little town. It was everything he needed. Well, it would be if he could find a decent gay bar nearby.

Lee didn't want to tar the town with an inappropriate brush, but he was used to living in big cities where most guys didn't give a shit if the omega was male or female. But in a backwater like this? He was prepared to be completely unsurprised if men were rigidly hetero and wouldn't even look at an omega unless they were female. It was completely backwards, in Lee's opinion, but by the same token, he was only into male alphas so he couldn't really talk.

Sexuality was a complicated beast.

And that thought pressed on his mind as he followed the scent coming from the direction he was already heading - to the station's locker room.

The first thing Lee saw of Chief Lupescu was his broad, naked back. He had a towel around his waist and his skin was coated in droplets of water. He probably shouldn't have stood there for a moment to drink in the view, but he did and wasn't about to apologise for it.

When he realised the alpha was about to turn, Lee cleared his throat and continued into the locker room.

At that, Lupescu looked up at him as he made his way to his locker and stowed his bag.

"Morning Chief," Lee said, nonchalant.

"Fallon," Lupescu greeted, making the deduction, given that they hadn't yet formally met.

There was a moment of quiet before Lupescu continued drying off and dressing. Lee made a point not to look, not to ogle the man. That wasn't going to go down well, he was sure.

So Lee got ready in silence and didn't look up when the alpha left the locker room and the air changed.

*

Lee had been put on third watch for his first two weeks, and so only saw Lupescu during shift changes. And that seemed to suit the Chief just fine.

There was a gruff edge about him, that others confirmed was just how the Chief was to everyone. Despite that, it was clear the man was well respected and many of the other crew got on with him very well.

But Lee couldn't help the niggling feeling that some of it was personal.

Lee didn't make a secret of his sexuality. Sure he wasn't propositing his co-workers, but there was locker room banter and Lee wasn't about to pretend he was someone he wasn't. In that respect he was upfront, and despite a couple of frowns, no one bothered him about it, whether they had issues or not. He'd been clear to Katz at his interview, wary of coming to a small town that might have an issue working with a gay man. And she had waved it all away and made clear that anyone remotely having an issue with it, would be talking to her.

Her influence maybe didn't extend to the Chief.

Or maybe Lee was just being paranoid? If the complete lack of acknowledgement other than three of four grunts since he'd arrived was usual for the alpha then he shouldn't care. But, he did see Nigel interacting with others. Yes he was gruff and he didn't join in the banter, but he was friendly with them as they came and went.

Maybe it was just because he didn't know Lee yet? Or maybe he was just fucking homophobic?

Lee couldn't dismiss the thought and he sure as shit wasn't going to let it bother him. He was there to do a job, it was as simple as that.

Or it had been, until in his third week, when he and the Chief were both on second watch.

Lee grit his teeth when he arrived on shift. The first watch hadn't stood down yet but he liked to be there early. He could take his time unpacking his food into the fridge and leisurely drinking the healthy juice he brought with him.

It was all routine now.

Other than a nice glass or two of fine wine, Lee considered his lifestyle pretty healthy. He'd managed to keep running from before his diagnosis right up until treatment got too brutal. And he'd definitely upped the healthy eating and drinking since getting the all clear. And part of that was the routine he kept, regardless of shift pattern.

He was just stowing his food in the fridge in the break out room when the Chief walked in.

"Chief," Lee said and nodded a greeting.

Alone together with no choice but to acknowledge him it would seem, the Chief replied, "Fallon." Acknowledging him for a moment before going to the coffee machine.

Lee let out a chuckle and finished pushing his food into the fridge before standing up and watching the Chief get the coffee brewing.

"What's so funny," Lupescu growled, not looking up at him.

"Oh, nothing. I just wasn't sure you even knew my name."

That earned him a hard glare before the Chief looked away again.

"I know everything I need to about everyone working at this station."

Oh. Well, that sounded like a loaded sentence.

Lee left it at that and from there was pretty happy to continue to avoid the Chief as much as he clearly avoided him.

They managed to miss each other in the breakout room almost every time, unless there was a substantial number of their colleagues in there. All in all it became routine and Lee didn't even think about it.

By the time he was half way through his second month, he found he could get on pretty well pretending that the Fire Chief didn't exist.

*

Lee felt his entire body relax as he entered the bar.

As much as he was enjoying his new small town life, there was no denying how much he'd missed going to places like this.

And it had been months!

Unsure what exactly to expect from the only gay bar in a fifty mile radius, Lee was impressed. It had a warm, soft atmosphere, playing some gentle rock. Not quite like the places he used to frequent, clubs and bars with loud music and bright lights. But this was nice. Or maybe he was just getting old since his recovery?

Either way it was comfortable and that was all he needed. As nice as it was to be around other gay people for the first time since he moved to the town, there was no denying that his true purpose was to find a hookup.

He didn't even care if it was just a blow job or hand job in the bathrooms. He craved the touch of someone's hand other than his own. A rough, strong, virile male alpha.

Even as he moved towards the bar to order a drink, Lee could scent several candidates in the room. Not least the strong, broad back of the man already sat smoking at the bar. Just from his back, Lee couldn't help but be tempted. He was an alpha in his prime, his scent rising above all other scents in the bar.

It was of course the obvious move to wander over to the bar, and despite the lack of patrons along the vast expanse of it, he took a seat next to the alpha.

"Should I ask if you come here often?" Lee flirted, leaning in close to the alpha.

Lee saw the alpha's jaw tighten as he turned, recognising in an instant that he had taken a seat next to Nigel Lupescu. The Fire Chief, his boss.

"Fuck," Lee spat out, nearly backing up off his stool. But before either of them could say or do another thing, the server arrived and asked for Lee's order.

He ordered a glass of wine that he was, frankly, surprised they stocked. But the whole time his eyes didn't leave Lupescu's. The alpha's eyes were burning at him with something like rage. In fact, Lee was pretty sure the Chief was mad as hell at him, though couldn't imagine why. If he didn't want to get hit on by other men, he shouldn't come to a damn gay bar.

Maybe he was just there to meet a friend? No, that didn't feel right.

When his wine was set in front of him and he paid, the server left them and Lee knew one of them had to say *something*. So he did.

"I didn't realise it was you." Lee started, by way of an apology. But he was unable to not add with a chuckle, "Though if you will drink at a gay bar then you might expect to get hit on by men."

Nigel huffed and looked away, staring straight ahead and taking another drag of his cigarette before stubbing it out in the ashtray. Then he picked up his drink, a whiskey from the looks of it, and knocked it back in one go.

He was clearly leaving. And once he started to get up from his stool Lee reached out a hand and took hold of his arm.

“Hey, wait. We’ve got to work together. I don’t want this to be an issue. I just-” Lee stopped when Lupescu looked at him. There wasn’t just anger there but something else. Fear perhaps?

Maybe the Chief hadn’t mistakenly wandered in here, or intended to meet all these gay friends he must have.

“I-I won’t tell anyone I saw you here.” Lee offered, gently.

Lee had never much been one for the closet. He’d been out of the closet since he stumbled out of it in his mother’s heels before he’d even reached his first heat.

But he understood that it wasn’t the same for everyone else. Lupescu was the Fire Chief of a small town. And he’d come from Romania, from what he knew from Katz, and maybe things were even worse there?

For a moment Lee was sure that Lupescu was going to pull away, he was already practically snarling. But instead he muttered angrily, “I’ve been fucking dreading this since the day Katz hired you.”

“What?” Lee blinked, incredulous. “Is this why you barely grunt at me at the station?”

Lee shook his head and chuckled and Lupescu pulled his arm from Lee’s grasp and glared.

“I knew you’d find this place sooner or later and fucking hoped I wouldn’t be here when you did.” The chief growled. “My one fucking place where I can…”

“Hook up?” Lee offered when Lupescu trailed off.

That earned him another scowl and Lupescu grit out through a tight jaw, “Where I can be myself.”

Lee wasn’t laughing then, in fact his heart ached.

“I’m sorry.” He said quietly. “I didn’t mean to take that from you.”

They were quiet for a moment and finally Lee said, “Let me buy you a drink. Honestly, I’m not a bad guy.”

Nigel looked at him for a moment before giving a curt nod.

The scowl was still firmly on the alpha's face but he settled a little. He remained side on to Lee as they continued to drink and Lee signalled the server again.

They drank side by side in silence for the first round and then finally Lee couldn't take much more of it.

"So I was at the 34th Street Station for about seven years before I got cancer. I did think about quitting it all after that. I had some good leads on business opportunities, a friend who could have set me up in the wine business. I could have managed my own bar." He stopped and tipped his glass towards Nigel to indicate his interest in wine. The alpha blinked and stared so Lee continued, now his audience was definitely paying attention. "I like my wine."

Nigel grunted but he didn't miss the way the alpha's eyes tracked him as he took a swig of his wine.

And that made Lee shudder.

Was he trying to pick up his boss?

No. No that definitely hadn't been his intent, but he was something of a shameless flirt and that was something that he couldn't exactly turn off.

But all the same, Nigel Lupescu was an attractive man, there was no denying that. And a man who, apparently, was attracted to other men.

Lee was dying to ask whether Nigel was into male omegas, or male alphas. Or both? But that really would be taking it too far.

After a moment of silence Nigel took another gulp of his drink and then asked, "Why didn't you? Go do wine things?"

Lee shrugged, "I guess I liked being a firefighter too much. I mean, I love wine, but I don't see running my own wine bar as being quite so fulfilling."

Lee was smiling until Nigel frowned and asked, "Then why did you consider it?"

He hadn't really thought so far ahead as to where this conversation might lead and he'd opened the floodgates now, he couldn't really close them. "Um, I…" Lee cleared his throat. "I felt weak. I felt broken. After the cancer treatment. It took a long time to get back on my feet and even then I wasn't sure I could ever get back to 100% of who I had been. That scared me. And I was worried that going back to work would just end in disappointment."

Lee sighed, looking down at his glass. "I was scared that I wouldn't be the person I once was and… It's hard enough to be an omega in a job like this. If I couldn't hold my own on top of that?" Lee shook his head.

He glanced over and saw Nigel's tightened jaw, his side profile.

"But then I got better," Lee continued. "I was given the all clear and I recovered from the treatment enough that I could finally see a place for myself back in the job. Just not… Not in

the city. Not with high rises and-" He shook his head.

He still had that fear that if push came to shove, in a real emergency, he wouldn't be able to do what was needed. His body would give out and people would get hurt.

"Fuck," Nigel muttered under his breath and drained his glass. "Katz told me you were a fucking barrel of laughs."

Lee blinked and the insensitivity of the man. And then laughter bubbled out of him like he couldn't hold it in.

At that Nigel looked over and the corner of his mouth lifted in a smirk.

"You're an asshole." Lee commented and Nigel bowed his head in acknowledgement.

"Rough around the edges, apparently." Nigel countered.

Lee chuckled and signalled the server again.

By the time they were on their fourth drink they were laughing. Well, Lee was. Chuckling hard in a way he hadn't in a long time. Nigel was much more understated in his amusement and Lee found he enjoyed that quite a bit.

He was also, clearly, very used to being private. He spoke little about himself and always then seemed distant. Not cold, but unused to sharing and Lee respected that. Lee on the other hand had always been an open book, so ending up telling Nigel his coming out story wasn't exactly surprising.

"I was about ten I guess?" Lee chuckled as he sloshed his wine glass slightly. "I had a crush on an alpha boy at school. He wasn't so happy. I came home with a black eye."

"Fuck," Nigel muttered and shook his head. There was anger there and Lee didn't mind seeing that on his behalf. But he also didn't want to leave a sour feeling hanging in the air.

"It wasn't all bad. His best friend, it turned out, stuck up for me. Ended up losing my virginity to him." Lee grinned.

Nigel spat out his drink. "When you were fucking ten?" He roared.

"What? No!" Lee corrected and laughed. "No, years later. We ended up in a class together senior year and we did it prom night."

"Fucking romantic," Nigel growled and Lee chuckled again.

"Also no. I went stag with a group of popular girls I'd become friends with. They were all alphas and practically ruled the school and had no interest in dates for prom. They wanted to keep their options open. And he… well, he'd gone with some omega girl he'd been dating on

and off for a while. They ended up having a very public breakup right outside the main hall and I just happened to be there to console him."

"I bet you did," Nigel chuckled.

Lee shrugged, lifting his wine glass and speaking over the rim, "He'd rented a hotel room and it would have been a shame for it to go to waste."

Nigel snorted and shook his head with a grin.

Lee smiled and the server came back over to them. "Another?" Lee asked, but Nigel finished off his glass and shook his head.

"Nah. I should get home." Nigel grumbled, seeming hesitant to go but it was late. At least neither of them were on shift the next day.

"Sure," Lee nodded. They both started to stand and then Nigel stopped.

"You live near me, right? Just off High Street?" Nigel asked, as though remembering info from his staff file.

Lee nodded, "I live off the High Street. Is that near you? I'm just renting a little apartment for now."

Nigel nodded, "Wanna share a cab?"

"Sure."

*

When Lee had agreed to share a cab, he hadn't expected to spend the ride making out with his boss.

He was pretty sure that hadn't been Nigel's plan either, given the shock on his face when they first kissed.

They were relaxed in the back, both tired, talking in low voices. But then the car hit a pothole throwing them together. They laughed and the next thing Lee knew, they were kissing.

It was hard and rough. Desperate. But then they both drew back at the same time, Nigel in complete shock. Lee was shocked too but less horrified than apparently Nigel was.

"Fuck, sorry. I didn't-" Nigel started.

"No, no. I shouldn't have-" Lee equally tried to take the blame.

And then they were kissing again. Nigel's hand at the back of his neck, holding him tight as he plundered his mouth.

Lee was instantly hard, grinding against Nigel's hip.

They didn't even notice the cab had stopped in front of Nigel's house until the driver cleared his throat. They jumped apart and looked up to see where they were.

Lee was about to brush the whole thing off and sheepishly say he'd see Nigel at work, but then Nigel opened the door on his side and stepped out onto the sidewalk, reaching back in and taking Lee's hand and tugging him out with him.

Lee stood there, bewildered for a moment as Nigel threw some cash in the cabbie's window and the car pulled away.

When Nigel turned back to him the alpha looked suddenly hesitant.

He was right, Lee's place wasn't far from here. He could walk.

But then Nigel stepped closer and swallowed, then in a low, gruff voice asked, "Is this okay?"

He took hold of Lee's hand and nodded his head toward the little town house they stood outside.

Lee's heart started to thump in his chest. He really should not, most definitely should NOT go home with his closeted boss.

"Sure," Lee replied, breathless.

Perhaps Nigel realised how exposed they were then and he dropped Lee's hand and stalked towards the house, expecting the omega to follow.

He didn't relax again until they were inside and he closed the door, pining Lee to it.

"I don't do this a lot. Bring people here, I mean. Too many neighbours."

"Hey, I'm just a colleague coming in for one last drink before I head home." Lee suggested the cover with a smile.

He was surprised when Nigel looked a little saddened and when the alpha added, "Maybe not too soon?"

"Fuck." Lee muttered. "This is a really bad idea. And believe me when I say, I am almost never the voice of reason!"

Nigel chuckled and rested his forehead against Lee's, "As your boss, I agree. This is a terrible idea… I just…" Nigel raised a hand and rubbed his thumb across Lee's bottom lip. "I've been wanting to kiss these lips all night."

“Fuck,” Lee muttered again, unable to stop his hips from pushing forward into Nigel’s, finding the alpha just as hard as he was.

“Yes please,” Nigel replied, and then his mouth was on Lee’s.

*

“I don’t think I’m going home,” Lee chuckled as Nigel snuggled up behind him, sliding his hardening cock between Lee’s legs, wet with slick and come.

It would be dawn in a couple of hours and they hadn’t stopped fucking since Lee’s back had hit Nigel’s bed. As soon as Nigel had gotten hard again, they’d start over.

And Lee was loving it.

There was something about the evening that felt final. As though this would be their one and only liaison, which Lee could understand. And they were both making the most of it.

“Hmm, yeah you can stay.” Nigel purred in his ear and then nuzzled against his neck.

Lee sucked in a breath and shifted his leg, hiking it up slightly to allow Nigel better access. And then the alpha slid into him and Lee moaned.

“You feel so good,” Lee muttered, breathless as Nigel started to languidly thrust in and out of him.

The last three knottings had been hard and rough, and Lee had enjoyed every moment. But this?

Tired and aching as he now was, this was perfect. It was as though Nigel read his desires perfectly. Or else the alpha’s desires aligned completely with his own.

Nigel’s arms wrapped around Lee’s chest, fingers playing lightly over one nipple, pulling Lee back against him.

Slowly Nigel’s hand travelled down, one still across his chest as the other began to gently stroke Lee’s leaking cock.

“You’re good at this.” Lee muttered. “Lots of practice?”

“Not really.” Nigel’s reply was cold, and for a moment Lee was concerned he’d just broken the spell they were both under. But then Nigel nuzzled deeper into the crook of his neck, breathing in his scent and continued, “It’s just very easy with you.”

Lee let out a sigh and reached a hand back to grip Nigel’s hair and pulled him forward as he turned his head. Their mouths met softly and the kiss was sensual. Almost loving.

And Lee just gave into it, letting the moment consume him.

He had never considered a long term mate, something serious and sustainable. That wasn't the guy he was, and yet there was something of that here. A taste of it, a dream of it for a moment.

For a night.

Nigel pulled out of him as their bodies rolled and moved, until Lee was under him and he slid back inside. Their bodies entwined from head to toe as they kissed and made love, Nigel knotting him again to both of their completion.

*

Three weeks earlier Lee had fallen asleep in the Fire Chief's arms, and then left early before the alpha woke, to save Nigel the awkwardness he would surely feel.

And now they were on a shift together for the first time since then.

Everything had been as it had before. Grunts and avoidance, easily managed because of their shift patterns. But there could be none of that tonight as the shift crew sat eating pizza in the breakout room, waiting for a call.

Lee didn't miss the way Nigel glanced at him as he walked through the room.

"Chief!" Darko called out, signalling Nigel over. "Eat!"

Nigel's jaw clenched but he couldn't exactly say no, so Lee moved. Sat opposite Darko, he stood and offered his seat.

"Here, Chief. I'm done." If Nigel wanted to keep his distance, then Lee was going to respect that. He had no intention of making the alpha uncomfortable, especially at work.

Nigel grunted and took Lee's seat.

As Lee walked away, he was surprised to hear one of the others say quietly, "You should ease up on him boss, he's not bad. For an omega."

There were a few chortles and Lee rolled his eyes before continuing to the locker room.

The day passed without incident and Lee barely saw Nigel until the end of the shift when everyone was getting ready to leave.

Lee was surprised when Nigel called out, "Fallon, a word." And then walked to his office. Lee followed him nonetheless, no one else batting an eye.

"Yes, Chief?" Lee asked as he closed the door behind him.

He was surprised to look up at Nigel and see his face was dark with anger. "What the fuck are you playing at?" He growled.

Lee blinked, confused and somewhat amused. He liked to rile people up, though perhaps this wasn't the time and place.

"What am I playing at?" Lee asked, curious.

Nigel huffed and threw up his hands, quietening as a couple of the crew walked passed the door. When they passed he growled and dropped down into his chair, hands clenched in front of him on his desk.

"You're driving me fucking crazy!" Nigel growled.

"I-" Lee started with a frown, even more confused. "What have I done?"

"Don't act fucking innocent. You leave in the middle of the night and then avoid me? I'm sure that this shit isn't a problem with your usual fuck buddies, but we've got to work together and-"

"Wait!" Lee held up his hand to stop Nigel. "What were you expecting? What did you want?"

At that, Nigel blushed but glared at Lee nonetheless.

"I can't be what you want." Lee said softly.

"I don't…" Nigel started angrily and then trailed off.

"We had a great night. An amazing night," Lee smiled gently. "But it can't be more than that. I haven't been avoiding you, I've been giving you space. I left before you woke, so you didn't have to deal with it. I was trying to respect your boundaries."

Nigel's jaw twitched and Lee could sense the alpha wanted to push back on his words, but there was nothing to say to that.

"Nigel," Lee breathed out his name. "I think it would be great to be with you again, but I can't. I'm not made for sneaking around, it just isn't who I am. And I don't think you're gonna come out of the closet for a fuck buddy."

Lee kept his tone light though Nigel continued to glare at him. Even so, when the alpha didn't respond, Lee nodded and turned back to the door.

"Lee…" Nigel started, but when Lee turned again to look at him, Nigel had looked away and shook his head.

Lee left, closing the door soundly behind him.

*

Lee was thankful when the week was over and their shift rotations were out of sync again. Even more so for the fact that Lee's scheduled heat leave then started and now he was settled comfortably in the nest he'd made of his bed.

He'd got it down to a fine art now. Scheduling the twice a year leave when he needed to give his body a break from suppressants and allow a heat.

Where he used to live he had a standing appointment at a heat clinic, but after checking out the few locally, there weren't any he was all that impressed with. Instead he'd decided just to manage his heat at home with toys and pornos. Finding for the first time in his life he had felt the urge to purchase porn featuring firefighters. It wasn't something he'd particularly been interested in before, not uncomfortable, but just too close to home. But now? It was all too easy to picture Nigel as the alpha in the porn and that was more of a turn on than he wanted to think about.

Truth was, if Nigel had wanted more, been out and open? Maybe Lee would have considered it. A fling wouldn't be good for their working situation. But an ongoing fuck buddy would have been worth considering. Of course, he'd have been discrete at work, but even so, he wasn't about to start anything with someone closetted.

There was a difference between discretely fucking someone you worked with, and having to keep their secret. It was a pressure he didn't want. And before Nigel had pulled him aside, he wouldn't have even thought that Nigel wanted it either. But clearly the alpha had wanted *something*, and whatever it was, Lee could not provide it.

Which was a shame, because as he looked down at the suppressants he hadn't taken for two days, feeling his heat already itching under his skin, it might have been nice to actually spend it with someone.

Lee put the pills back in his bedside drawer and pulled out the large knotting dildo he saved only for his heats. He lay back on the bed and turned on the video, idly stroking his dick as the 'story' started to play out. This one was a firefighter and the omega he'd rescued. He was saving the firefighter on firefighter ones for once his heat really started to set in.

It was going to be an interesting three days.

*

Lee woke tired, sore but mostly sated. His heat had broken but he hadn't been fulfilled in the same way he would have been if he'd gone to a clinic. A beta with a knotting ring wasn't exactly the best, but it was undeniably better than a dildo. Of course that had been at a very specialised clinic that was almost worth going back to the city for. All the others, including the ones locally, only provided female alphas for male omegas. And whilst in heat a knot was a knot, there was something that left him hollow from the lack of physical attraction.

So whilst his heat was over, he still craved some actual human contact.

He napped a little longer before getting up and showering, dressing in nice but comfortable clothes and heading out to the bar where he'd met Nigel.

Lee hoped to hell the alpha wasn't there. He didn't need the drama or the temptation. He just wanted to find a hook up for the night before he started suppressants again the next morning.

When he walked in he took a deep breath, enjoying the scent of alpha at the same time as being relieved to not scent Nigel. Lee made his way to the bar and ordered a soda, waiting for the inevitable.

It didn't take a minute for an alpha to pull up the stool next to him.

"If you don't mind me saying, sweet thing, you smell delicious." The rough, southern accent grated. It wasn't terrible per se, more that it was hard to deny how much he wanted to hear Nigel's beautifully accented rumble instead.

Lee forced himself to relax and turn to the alpha with a smile. He was attractive and his lust was obvious in his eyes. He was a perfect prospect really, and yet Lee couldn't help but remember his night with Nigel.

"You looking for a friend?" The alpha continued and Lee clenched his jaw.

He wanted to say yes, wanted to leave with the man and work off this lingering feeling from his heat. But all he could think about was Nigel.

"Actually, sorry. I think I'm going to go home." Lee found himself saying even as his body cried out in protest. The alpha looked disappointed and annoyed, but didn't try to stop him as Lee stepped off of his stool and headed for the exit.

Even so he could sense the alpha following him a few paces behind. He might need to let the door staff know once he was outside.

"Fuck!"

As Lee opened the door to leave, someone else was walking through and they collided heavily. The unexpected impact almost had Lee off his feet, but then arms grabbed him and pulled him upright.

Nigel.

The alpha's scent had his mouth watering, as did the growl Nigel let out.

Lee was still firmly in his grasp and realised he was growling at the alpha over Lee's shoulder.

"Nigel." Lee scalded and the alpha's hold loosened enough for him to step back and turn. The alpha that had been following him had backed off and returned to the bar, leaving Nigel standing in the doorway scowling at him.

"You're on heat leave." Nigel said, at which Lee blinked. Nigel looked between Lee and the retreating alpha, an unreadable expression on his face but a rising scent of anger. "Sorry I interrupted your *date*." Nigel grumbled and started to try and walk past the omega.

"Wait." Lee stopped him with a hand on his arm, annoyance and arousal rising in him. "I was just leaving actually." Lee snapped. "Alone. Not that it's any of your business."

Nigel grunted. “No, I suppose not. I guess you can just fuck anyone you want.”

“Yes, I fucking can.” Lee replied, all the more annoyed. “What’s your problem, Nigel? What do you want from me?”

Nigel was silent for a moment and then shook his head. “Nothing. I don’t want anything. You just go ahead and fuck anyone you want.”

Lee scoffed and shook his head. “Like you’re about to do? Isn’t that why you came here?” Lee rolled his eyes.

“I came here for you,” Nigel blurted angrily and then drew in a sharp breath.

Lee narrowed his eyes. “What are you-”

“Since we hooked up,” Nigel growled, begrudgingly admitting what he had already implied. “I come here, to see if you’re here.”

Lee shook his head, “Even after I told you it couldn’t happen again.”

“I know. And every time I come here and you’re not here, I’m relieved. Because I don’t have to have this fucking conversation.”

“Nigel,” Lee replied softly and shook his head again. “This is crazy. And fucking unfair. Don’t put this on me.”

Nigel winced and then reached out, taking Lee’s hand. Lee didn’t pull away, savouring the touch he had been craving.

“I know I shouldn’t want you. But I do.” Nigel admitted. “And it’s so fucked up.”

“Who says?” Lee asked, a little breathless.

“I’m an alpha male, I can’t do this. This wasn’t how I was raised.”

“No, it’s how you were born.” Lee was sobered by his own words and he pulled away, taking his hand back. “You need to work that out for yourself, I can’t be part of that, so don’t put it on me.”

Silence fell between them and Lee let out a sigh before cupping Nigel’s face and drawing him into a gentle kiss. A goodbye kiss.

He pulled back just enough to speak against Nigel’s mouth, “When you work it all out, tell me. But remember, I’m not yours. I owe you nothing. I can do anything or anyone I want.”

Nigel let out a defeated, shuddering breath. Lee turned and left the bar, hoping another night with his dildo would satisfy.

*

In the following weeks, Lee didn't miss the longing glances from Nigel. Nor how conflicted the alpha was. He was trying, that was for sure. Trying to interact with Lee in much the same way as he did with the rest of the crew. Much easier when they were just passing between shifts.

And Lee wanted to be okay with that. But in fact, the increased niceties just made him want more. It wasn't lost on him that more than three months later, he still hadn't slept with anyone else since Nigel.

He wanted to believe that it was because the situation had left him wanting what he couldn't or shouldn't have. But the truth was, he liked Nigel. He liked the respected, gruff but professional chief. And he liked the soft and gentle alpha he became in the bedroom. Nigel was everything Lee had never realised he'd wanted in a mate, that was the problem.

Lee hadn't once considered settling down before, and now it was something he found himself desiring without wanting to and the alpha in question was off limits.

Lee's shift ran over. A call out had taken a while to resolve, a campfire that got out of control. A couple of the trees came down before they finally got the blaze under control. They rarely had big jobs like this and thankfully no one got hurt. Lee and Katz both got hit by some of the detritus but neither were hurt beyond some small cuts and bruises, mostly.

All in all, it could have been a lot worse, so whilst he showered in the station to try and get the stink of fire and ash off of him, Lee considered himself lucky.

It took forever to wash the smell away, and then finally he got out of the shower and wrapped a towel around his waist, holding his arm where his shoulder ached from the impact of a bigger branch. A strain, nothing more but he'd probably best ice it once he got home.

Lee was tired and he knew the current shift were probably all ordering pizza at that moment, and he was half tempted to stay so he didn't have to cook once he got home. But Nigel was on that shift and he didn't have the energy to pretend being friendly was fine.

Lee started to pull his civi clothes out of his locker when he heard the door open and close and then lock. No one ever locked the door to the communal room.

With a frown, Lee turned to see Nigel stood just inside the locker room, looking almost distraught and unable to meet Lee's eyes.

"Nigel?"

"Katz said you were injured. Are you okay?" Nigel asked through a clenched jaw.

"Just a strain. Some cuts and bruises, no worse than Bev." Lee replied warily.

Nigel shook his head, "She said, but I had to see. To check."

"Nigel, you can't do this." Lee protested, wanting to sound angry but failing. He wanted to *feel* angry, but it was hard to deny the pleasure at Nigel's concern. "You can't check on me everytime I'm hurt. What if-"

Lee let out a shocked cry as Nigel strode to him and pulled him into a kiss. It was hard and passionate and had Lee groaning despite himself.

“I’m glad you’re okay.” Nigel muttered against his mouth.

“Nigel,” Lee groaned which only served to make Nigel all the more eager. He kissed Lee hungrily and pressed him against the lockers.

Lee couldn’t help his body’s reaction as he grew hard and wet and started to grind against the alpha.

“Fuck,” Nigel growled as he moved his mouth to Lee’s neck, nuzzling him as he his fingers fumbled with the towel. His hand made it underneath and a moment later his fingers were inside Lee.

“Oh god,” Lee sobbed as Nigel fucked him with his fingers, pressed completely against him and nuzzling at him. Both forgetting where they were and how bad an idea this was. “Nigel,” Lee moaned, his hands now pulling at Nigel’s trousers.

It happened in a blur. Next thing Lee knew he was up against the lockers with his legs wrapped around Nigel’s waist, the alpha pumping into him as they both tried to remain quiet.

“Lee, I need-” Nigel cut himself off and Lee squeezed his eyes shut. He was sure he had an idea of what Nigel needed.

“Don’t knot me,” Lee panted, “Not here. Not now.”

Nigel whimpered and nodded against him. He thrust into Lee a couple more times before Lee felt Nigel’s hand snake between them and he grabbed hold of his knot. Nigel knotted in his hand as he grunted and came hard inside Lee.

Lee’s eyes rolled. The friction had been great, but it was the thought of the alpha coming inside him that had Lee coming between them.

They panted together for a few moments before Nigel pulled out with a wince.

The alpha squeezed his eyes shut for a moment and then moved quickly, putting his dick away and grabbing Lee’s towel to wipe the omega’s come from him. He dropped the towel to the floor, turned and left without another word.

Lee let out a sigh, cleaning himself up and dressing, thinking of how he now ached all over, almost as bad as his shoulder. In need of something. Something *more*.

When Lee got home there was a message on his phone from Nigel. He was half tempted not to read it, and truly surprised and pissed off when he did.

:: Don’t come in tomorrow. Katz will send you the info for our physio, get your shoulder looked at and get it cleared by the physio before you come back::

Several times Lee wrote out an angry reply about how maybe he should instead have his knot looked at, but he ended up not sending anything at all. It opened up too much. Too many things he didn't want to talk about, not least knowing what it was truly like to be signed off work due to illness and how he hated Nigel was doing this to him.

Instead he did as he was told and a shift later he was back with a signed letter from the physio to say he was fit for duty.

And he and Nigel were apparently back to avoiding each other. If he ever even chanced to see Nigel, the alpha was glaring at him as though he was pissed off that Lee even existed.

*

A month later, Lee was considering whether he really should go for a career change. Maybe he wasn't a good fit for this job anymore. Or maybe he should just move again? Bit hard to explain to future employers that he wanted to relocate because he'd fallen for his boss.

Fuck. Lee muttered as the fire truck pulled up outside the hotel they'd been called to. More pressing things to worry about right now.

They piled out of the truck and started pulling out the hoses. It had started with a kitchen equipment malfunction and now the fire was burning through the restaurant of the small hotel.

Lee and Katz moved forward with two of the others, feeling the heat even through their gear. As much as they tried, there was just too much on fire now, there was no way of beating it back. They might not even be able to contain it if it grew worse.

"We need another truck," Bev shouted, "More hoses. Pull back."

Lee nodded and they all started to pull back, there was no saving the restaurant. All they could do was try and suppress it, stop the spread into the rest of the hotel.

When Lee heard the muffled cry behind him, he turned sharply.

Darko had gone down, furniture in the way, the ceiling burning up, a decorative pillar had dropped and narrowly avoided pinning him.

"I've got you," Lee called as he tried to douse the area around Darko with his hose. When he finally reached the alpha, he was staggering to his feet. He gave Lee a shaky thumbs up and they started to move again.

Lee didn't hear Darko cry out a warning until it was too late. He didn't see or hear anything until the damage to the ceiling above them, overtook them and it fell in, pinning him to the ground as flames licked around him.

*

Lee woke in pain.

He felt a little cold despite the soft blanket against his skin. All cold except his hand which was hot and sweaty. He tried to flex his fingers and then felt them being squeezed.

Lee opened his eyes and looked down at this hand.

“Nigel?” The alpha sat next to him, Lee’s hand in both of his and held against his lips.

“Lee,” Nigel breathed his name with relief, kissing his hand.

“You shouldn’t-” Lee started and tried to move, pain shooting through him.

Nigel got to his feet, keeping hold of Lee’s hand in one of his own and moving his free hand up to stroke Lee’s brow.

“Stay still, you got banged up pretty bad. You-”

The door opened and Katz walked in holding two takeaway cups of coffee. Lee was surprised when Nigel didn't pull his hands away. Katz eyed them for a moment before speaking.

“Thank god. You were out for a while,” She smiled at Lee. “I’ll go get the doctor.”

“I’ll go,” Nigel growled and moved away from the bed, only then letting go of Lee. Katz looked like she was about to protest, but instead she nodded and they watched as he left and closed the door behind him.

“You alright?” Bev asked. “You were almost crushed. Took us a minute to get to you.” She looked guilty so Lee forced a smile despite everything aching.

“I’m okay.” Lee croaked.

Bev nodded and looked over her shoulder before asking, “And Nigel?”

“Nigel got hurt?” Lee asked, confused.

Bev let out a chuckle. “Not yet. Depends, you going to break his heart?”

“Wh-” Lee started, frowning.

She shook her head, “Figured there was something between you. The way he roared through that building when he heard you were down. Took three of us to hold him back whilst you were pulled out. Never seen him lose control like that before.”

“Oh.” Lee blushed and Katz smiled.

“I guess that answers that. I should be surprised but I’m not. Makes more sense than I thought it might. Just… is it mutual? Are you guys a thing or is he pining after you like a puppy and about to get his heart broken?”

Lee blinked, “There isn’t anything… not a… there has been. But he’s not out.”

“Yeah you might want to talk to him about that, because his reaction to you getting hurt sure as shit didn’t go unnoticed. Either way-”

She stopped when Nigel returned, a doctor in tow.

By the time the doctor finished checking him over, Lee was exhausted again and couldn’t keep his eyes open. The doctor left, then Katz and maybe Nigel did too? He wasn’t sure as he drifted back to sleep.

When Lee woke again everything was dark, only a dim night light above him, the hospital quiet. Night time now.

When he tried to reach for the glass of water on the side, Lee felt the heaviness of someone on him.

And there was Nigel.

He looked down and Nigel was sat once more against the bed, laying half over his lap. Holding him.

His movement woke the alpha and Nigel raised his head.

“You okay?” He asked, concern apparent.

“Water,” Lee said and before he could reach for it again, Nigel was up and handing it to him. He took a few sips before asking, “When can I get out of here?”

“A few days, they want to keep you in for observation in case of internal bleeding. And to change your plaster casts.” He indicated to Lee’s arm and leg on his left side. “Once the swelling goes down they need to put on new ones.

Lee nodded his understanding, then shook his head. “I hate hospitals.”

Nigel nodded and his jaw tightened. “I realised… with the physio. I should have been more tactful.”

Lee’s eyes widened in surprise and then he nodded. “It’s okay. I get it, it was necessary.”

“I could have handled it better. Been more aware.” Nigel preserved and then they both fell silent. “You deserve better than I’ve treated you.”

Lee sighed, “I can’t refute that, but I understand why you’ve acted how you have.” After a moment Lee frowned and asked, “How are you here? Aren’t visiting hours over?”

Nigel’s cheeks coloured enough that Lee could see the blush even in the dim light.

“I, um, told them I was your partner.” Nigel confessed.

Lee couldn't help but grin and ask, teasingly, “Business partner?”

Nigel frowned and growled, “Significant other.”

Lee went quiet, smiling all the same, feeling his heart flutter.

“And how will that work…”

Nigel let out a breath and lowered the bed rail, gently climbing in next to Lee. Pressing alongside him and cupping his face.

“However you want.”

Lee shook his head, “I don’t want you to come out for me. I want you to come out for yourself or not at all.”

“It is for myself. I thought… I thought I might lose you and I couldn’t bear it. I made the choice. Be miserable and try to pretend I don’t feel anything for you in order to save face and maintain some sort of bravado. For what?”

“And what if that’s not a smart move?” Lee asked, wondering if Nigel was going to wake up in a few days regretting all this.

Nigel shook his head. He leaned in close, his lips almost to Lee’s, “Smart or not. It’s the fucking love, drives me somewhat insane. I can’t keep it in anymore.”

He pressed his lips to Lee’s and Lee opened to him, ignoring his aching body as Nigel kissed him softly.

He finally pulled back, stroking Lee’s short hair as he advised, “You should get more sleep. I’ll hold you, and then in the morning I’m going to have to go into the station and fill in some paperwork.”

Lee started to nod off, managing to mumble, “For my injuries?”

“No, so I don’t get fired for inappropriate behaviour for having a relationship with a subordinate.” Nigel said, then muttered, “as if there was any way you’re subordinate to me.”

Lee chuckled, falling asleep in Nigel’s arms thinking only of getting out of the hospital and back into Nigel’s bed.

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